# ENGLAND'S POLICY IN CHINA

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# ENGLAND'S POLICY

IN

# CHINA

BY

ANDREW WILSON

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*When we have to do with the Chinese we should take care of being too hasty or warm; the Genius of the country requires that we should command our Passions, and act with a great deal of calmness. The Chinese would not hear in a Month what a Frenchman could speak in an Hour. Not that they want Fire and Vivacity; but they learn betimes to become masters of themselves, and are vain of being more polite, and more civilized than other People.*—DU HALDE.

*Do not act like the Man of Soong, who pulled his grass up in order to make it grow faster. On returning home to his family the Man of Soong said,—"To-day I am weary: I have assisted the grass to grow." His son hurried off to see this marvel; but, behold! the grass had withered and died. There are few persons in the world who do not thus assist the grass to grow. To consider it of no use and to reject it, will not weed the grass. To assist it in growing by pulling it up, is not only of no benefit but destructive.*—MENCIUS.

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HONGKONG
A. SHORTREDE & Co
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# PREFACE.

When it has been found that even dogs and horses are better managed by a union of kindness with firmness than by the punishment and violence which were formerly employed, it is not out of place to point out that a similar change of treatment in regard to China will most effectually secure the demands of England on that country. The real interests of both nations are so coincident, and the Chinese are so eminently a reasonable people, that there is no necessity for having recourse to acts of violence. What England has already obtained from the Celestials might easily have been got without war, had correcter ideas of their character been entertained, and more consideration been shown for their peculiar civilization and position.

In the recent case of Japan the government and public of England have had a striking illustration of the real causes which retard commerce and excite opposition to us in this part of the world; and the Japanese Mission to the United States has proved how successful a considerate policy may be, even with the most seclusive nation in the world.

The Japanese, however, appear pretty well able to take their own part. It is not so with the Chinese, who always prefer the use of argument when dealing with other nations; and whose position has been about as well or ill understood by us as ours has been by them. The dependence of their civilization on moral and intellectual forces has hitherto afforded them but little protection in their relations with Foreigners. They have suffered not merely from buccaneers of old, from the refuse of various nations collected on their coast, and from the aggressive spirit of a Foreign community chiefly composed of young men—who cannot be expected to have much sense of responsibility,—but also from the immense naval and military power of England being brought to bear upon them, on representations of their character made chiefly by incompetent judges, and on grounds which have been condemned by the conscience and intellect of England herself.

The time appears to have now arrived when a reconsideration of our whole position in regard to China may be hoped for; and the following pamphlet is issued as one contribution—however imperfect—to that end. It is not intended as an exposé of England's Policy in China, or closely-reasoned argument on that subject. Where much ignorance and more prejudice prevail, it is sufficient to challenge loose notions: and even where its views are condemned I shall be fully rewarded should it to any extent induce others, in re China, to inquire more widely, to think more deeply, and to cherish more Catholic feeling.

A. W.

*Hongkong, May 30, 1860.*

# ENGLAND'S POLICY IN CHINA.

## I.

Our position towards China is not entirely new, but the gravity of it is now being realised for the first time. England has more reason than Napoleon had in Egypt to remind her soldiers and her politicians in the Flowery Land that they are in the presence of Forty Centuries. His Forty Centuries looked down from Memnon's statue, from pyramid and obelisk and sculptured tomb, over great sandy wastes, and on a scanty degraded population long accustomed to the persuasion of the stick; but on the Expeditionary Force to China the Forty Centuries which look down are no ghost of a dead Past, but a vast nation, a polity, a mode of thought and modes of life, which have beheld the birth of authentic history, and, having survived the vicissitudes of four thousand years, are still hale and strong though they have lost the fire of youth. We have not to do with a country thinly peopled by savage tribes, which must yield their hunting grounds to the expanding populations of Europe. It is not a mouldering corpse or "a sick man" before which we now stand, but a great and grave nation suffering chiefly from the wounds which we have ourselves wantonly inflicted. It is a nation with arts and sciences which content its wants; with a literature unequalled in the depth of its practical wisdom; with a state of society more homogeneous and thoroughly organised than any other existing on the globe; with education generally diffused; with material benefits richly shared by the labouring classes; with a population which numbers more than a third of the human race, and which neither desires our interference nor refuses to accept our commerce.

Just before our first war with China commenced, the cunning report was spread that her people were eager to cast off their Tartar rulers, but that enormous falsehood was exposed by the manner in which the people in Chusan, at Ningpo, at Chin-

kiang and elsewhere, suffered themselves to be massacred along with the Tartar soldiers, by our troops. The dregs of the empire which followed our victorious arms for the sake of plunder, the once respectable citizens which the war had reduced to poverty and its horrors had turned into desperate bandits, with the native militia which had been formed when the imperial troops were employed against the Foreigner, all remained after peace had been concluded, and, encouraged by the loss of the prestige of Tartar invincibility, as also by real evils which the distracted government had not the time or the means to redress, gradually formed into that great rebellion which some would now make a further excuse for attacking China. Instead of binding up the wound, the same hand which struck this grievous blow, in order to protect the opium traffic which it solemnly pledged itself to renounce, is again raised, and may again descend with cruel effect upon a nation which was always slow to change and has lost the adaptability of youth. Even should the crime be avoided at present, it may be perpetrated at any moment, so long as we do not entertain views of our position in the far East much juster than those which have been cunningly disseminated by men, some of whom are little better than smugglers and pirates; and the committal of it is not unaccompanied by serious danger to ourselves. The facts are worthy of deep consideration that England's first war with China was interrupted by the massacre in Affghanistan, and that the troops sent out to carry on hostilities in 1857 were diverted to India by that dreadful mutiny and insurrection which made Europe shudder, and carried unspeakable horror into so many English homes. I do not suppose that these events were caused by our wars in China. They rather sprung from the same cause as our wars in China; they were based on the same exaggeration of our power and disregard of our duties. The same reckless spirit of aggression, aggravated by disregard of Asiatic feelings and ignorance of Asiatic passion, which led us to attack the Flowery Land, bore on Lord Auckland till our Indian empire was nearly lost among the snows of Affghanistan, and at a later period, caused that mixture of insult and insensate confidence in regard to the Sepoys of Hindostan which made the sun of our Indian empire all but set in blood and horror, while many of our bravest officers were hunted like vermin over plains which their valour had won. China, in its relation with England, may be regarded as marking the progress of a tide which, when it covers China, sweeps back with fatal effect on England herself. All but powerless to avenge herself, the Middle Kingdom is avenged by Nature, by that order of the world, which, when we arrogantly transgress its limits, is never at a loss for means of punishment.

## II.

In these circumstances it becomes England seriously to consider what it really wants, and is entitled to demand, in the far East, without being misled by such vague and specious phrases as "opening up China," the "progress of civilization,"

and "opportunities for commerce." When two powers and two civilizations so different as those of Britain and China come in contact with one another, opposition, misunderstanding and war are more or less inevitable. As a mandarin comically remarked lately, we strike China in the face with one hand, at the same time holding out the other, saying—"Now you be good friends with us." That is all very well, and it is to be hoped will produce great good in the long run as it has already done in some respects; but surely it is the duty of England as the aggressor, as the more powerful in physical force, and as governed by a purer religion and morality than exist in China, to be patient and considerate in its dealings with that country, above all taking care not to rouse resistance to its demands by stupifying and frightening both government and people. When an Englishman first comes out to this coast he is apt to be irritated by his Chinese servants, by their coolness, their slowness, and their inability or unwillingness to do anything except in their own way; but even if his own conscience fails to point out the duty of forbearance on his part, he will soon find, if a man of any sense, that nothing is to be gained with the Chinese by violence, or by impatiently urging them against the grain. Under violence and impatience they become stupid, obstinate, and treacherous; if met half way and quietly managed they are willing and intelligent. So it is, on a larger and infinitely more important scale, with the two nations. We understand them as little as they do us, and where there is no sufficient understanding, there can be no confidence or love.

Hence it is of importance to scrutinise closely our actual wants in China, to confine ourselves to these, and to seek their attainment in the most considerate, and (consequently) the most successful manner. As Napoleon says in his pamphlets, "Of what avail are any illusions?" We desire certain things in China, and some of them are possible of attainment; what are they? But on such an inquiry it is almost vain to enter without first protesting against the loose notions which prevail in regard to China, the falsehoods which are promulgated regarding it, and the flippant manner in which both that country and our relations to it are frequently judged. In point of fact the errors on this subject which have been promulgated and carelessly accepted, are the chief obstacles to a proper settlement of affairs.

## III.

On these matters our usual course is well illustrated by two amusing anecdotes. A missionary, whose character is too high for the supposition that he invented the story even for the sake of the exquisite joke, informs me that once when riding on the outside of a London cab, he told the driver that he had been in China. Cabby was much interested in the subject, and promptly asked,—"Are they a civilized-like people about there, Sir? do they take their gin of a morning?" As a brief handy test of civilization, or of the usual ideas attached to it, I know nothing comparable

with this question as to taking gin of a morning. Mr Meadows' laboured definitions must give way before it, and even Mr Carlyle's test of respectability appears commonplace in comparison. Again, at the taking of Ningpo, in the first war with China, the Tartar troops had just received pay to the amount of six dollars each, and our troops were not long in discovering that fact. It is said that one Irishman, on discovering only five dollars in the purse of a Tartar he had killed, gave the body an indignant kick, as he exclaimed,—"Ye profligate! ye've been and spint one of them!"

The Cabman and the Irish soldier afford excellent illustrations of the usual manner in which we judge the Civilization and condemn the moral character of the Chinese. We choose some habits or peculiarities of our own, and seeing they are not to be found in China—that the Chinese do not take their gin of a morning, we condemn the country as at best only semi-civilized, and therefore consider that it is no sin to attack it. Though chopsticks are really more convenient for Chinese cooking than knives and forks would be, we consider them absurd and uncivilized. Though the Chinese system of justice, which is based on the idea that the family, the village, and the nation, is responsible for the acts of its members, has much in its recommendation and is consonant with the genius of the people, we condemn its results as if they were merely unjust cruelties. Though there can never be a universal language except on the same principles as the Chinese, we can see nothing in the latter except its difficulty and uncouthness. There is almost nothing, however odd at first sight, which prevails among the Celestials that has not its sufficient reason, but our civilized critics take no account of that, and invariably *damnant quod non intelligunt*. The merchant who longs for war in the hope of removing certain supposed restrictions on commerce in the shape of internal custom houses, is not a whit better than the Irish soldier. He applauded the first two wars against China under the idea that it would increase his gains, and when he gets only five dollars out of the six which the traffic brings, he is indignant at the profligate government which he imagines spends the sixth dollar, though that is very doubtful, and if done at all is for the protection, not the hinderance, of land carriage. The politician who forces the Chinese government into an intercourse to which it is adverse, and which is unwarranted by the fundamental principles of the state, follows the example of the soldier, more especially when he is indignant with China and makes war upon it because some hairbreadth of his demand has not been complied with. So the white gold diggers of Australia and California abuse the moral character of the Chinese there because these latter, by superior temperance and frugality, save money and raise themselves by gold digging, while the more energetic and civilized white men soon dissipate their gains in the brothels and grog shops of Melbourne and San Francisco.

## IV.

Of the two great fundamental errors which underlie our judgment on Chinese matters, the first relates to our under-estimate of the Chinese.

Mr T. T. Meadows (than whom no man has entered more profoundly into Chinese matters) exclaims,—"I deliberately and seriously declare China to be the best misunderstood country in the world." When such is the case, as it unquestionably is, when Sinologues differ so much in their estimate of its civilization, when travellers present anecdotes of such various character, and when facts may be placed in such an opposite light according to our comprehension of the principles which underlie its polity and morals, it is better to rest judgment of Chinese matters on prominent indubitable facts and broad general considerations rather than on dubious details and conflicting theories. And it is at once apparent that the lowness of estimate of the country is usually in inverse ratio to the knowledge and intelligence of those by whom it is made. The missionaries who have traversed the empire in native costume, the scientific men who have resided at Peking, the interpreters who have accompanied diplomatic missions to the imperial court, with the laborious students whose lives have been devoted to China,—all these, though their personal interests lead them to depreciate, speak of that country with respect and even admiration, while the ignorant Irishman at the goldfields of Australia, the selfish storekeeper of Singapore, the dollar-hunter of Hongkong, who has not learned two words of the language, and the merchant's clerk of Shanghae, too often see nothing to admire, little to tolerate, and almost everything to condemn in China and the Chinese. Sir George Staunton, the learned translator of the Penal Code of China, says that those best acquainted with the subject have come to the conclusion that "a considerable proportion of the opinions entertained by Chinese and Europeans of each other was to be imputed either to prejudice, or to misinformation; and that upon the whole it was not allowable to arrogate, on either side, any violent degree of moral or physical superiority." Of that Penal Code even the *Edinburgh Review* was compelled to say,—"We scarcely know an European Code that is at once so copious and so consistent, or is nearly so freed from intricacy, bigotry, and fiction." Dr Morrison, the pious and able author of the great Chinese and English dictionary, said,—"In China there is much to blame, but something to learn. Education is there made as general as possible, and moral instruction is ranked above physical." Sir John Davis, a great part of whose life has been passed in the country, passed on them one of the highest eulogiums ever given to any people, when he truly wrote,—"Poverty is no reproach among them;" and he is of opinion that they have "been underestimated on the score of their moral attributes." Dr Williams, one of the highest living authorities on the Chinese, and who lately visited Peking as Secretary to the American Embassy, admits, though writing as a missionary, that "they have

obtained, by the observance of peace and good order, to a high degree of security for life and property; the various classes of society are linked together in a remarkably homogeneous manner by the diffusion of education and property, and equality of competition for office; and industry receives its just reward of food, raiment, and shelter, with a uniformity which encourages its constant exertion." It would be easy to make many more such extracts; all showing that whatever may be the opinion of the prejudiced and ignorant, those who have most claim to be heard in this matter speak of the Chinese with high respect, and are slow to condemn as bad what appears extraordinary and unintelligible.

But further, it is undeniable that, with very little change, China has prospered for centuries. Mr Carlyle saw that fact when he said in his "*Past and Present*,"—"These three hundred millions actually make porcelain, souchong tea, with innumerable other things; and fight, under Heaven's flag, against necessity;—and have fewer Seven-Years Wars, Thirty-Years Wars, French-Revolution Wars, and infernal fightings with each other, than certain millions elsewhere have." The 300 millions have prospered into 414 millions, according to the latest census accessible; and happy content is their usual state. We do indeed hear much about the Rebels, and in such a vast empire, where there are so many differences of race and religion, there must always be some disturbance, and at times rebellion and revolution; but it may be questioned whether in the single battle of Solferino there did not fall more men than in a whole year of Chinese revolution; and considering the dreadful wars which have swept over nearly all the lands of Europe since the outbreak of the French Revolution, China, with its rebellions and its executions, appears almost Paradise in comparison. There is even reason to believe that recent disturbances have in part arisen from the very success of the empire, and from its great increase of population during the present century.

There is something beautiful and touching in the spectacle presented by the vast masses of this empire—in their unflagging industry, gentle manners, reverence for old age, respect for talent and strong family affections. In these respects they are unsurpassed among any other people; and in happy content they bear away the palm. In all those primary virtues which are the foundation of an empire's prosperity, the Chinese may compare not unfavorably with most other people at present when we get beyond the scum of the nation which froths round the Foreign settlements. In particular the peasant is worthy of admiration.

> For him light labour spreads her wholesome store,
> Just gives what life requires and gives no more;

but he is surrounded by so many old established customs, reverences and arrangements that his poverty has no degrading effect, and he is not without intelligence and education. The Chinese are also eminently a reasonable people. In hardly any other country is there such a disposition among men, even of the poorest and

humblest classes, to respect "the rights" and yield obedience to reason. They have, of course, also their darker side; but that has been dwelt on by so many, and especially by popular writers, to such an extent as to convey to the home public a false and altogether exaggerated idea of the Celestials. Many of the peculiarities of China which at first sight appear monstrous to Europeans eyes, are easily reconcilable with good government when we understand their relationships and appreciate the peculiar genius of the people. No external and temporary circumstances have given China "a florid vigour not its own." Unlike the commercial nations of the West, which have succeeded each other in such rapid succession, she has prospered on her "native strength alone;" and in her own history, as compared with that of other nations, has proved the truth of the poet's lines,—

> That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
> As Ocean sweeps the laboured mole away;
> While self-dependent power can time defy,
> As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

A nation which has thus survived the trial of centuries, whom Nature has acknowledged by an ever happy and ever increasing population, on whom Time, "the test of truth," has set its seal, and whose institutions are grey with antiquity, is not to be condemned at the outcry of a few ignorant or designing men, neither is it to be hastily judged as either beneath us in the most essential elements of greatness, or requiring to be tinkered by our rough and unskilled hands.

## V.

But were the Chinese almost as bad as they have been represented by usually ill-informed or interested writers, the character of the Foreigners with whom they have been brought into contact goes far to justify the course they have pursued towards them. While a certain amount of isolation is studiously provided for in China, as may be seen from the laws against emigration from the sea-board, and the ancient great wall upon the Northern frontier, that isolation arose chiefly from the barbarous and savage character of the hordes (rather than nations) by which it was surrounded; and not from any desire to shut out cultivated strangers or new influences of a moral or spiritual kind. The supposed hostility of the Chinese to all strangers is in great part a delusion; and, in so far as it exists, has been entirely caused by the abominable conduct of strangers who have visited the country.

The first ambassador who was sent from Europe to China (from Lisbon in 1517) was welcomed by the Mandarins, sent at once to the Court of Peking, found it disposed to further his views, and was allowed to visit the coast and to trade without interference. But the following year, another Portuguese expedition, under Simon Andrade, availed themselves of the kindness of the Chinese to seize the people as slaves, to pillage and extort money from native vessels, and to indulge in other acts of piracy and plunder. He was driven away, but from that time there commenced a

buccaneering system on the coast of China, which is not even yet entirely extirpated, and which, in the minds of the Chinese, associated the name of Foreigner with sacrilege, with rapine, and with everything cruelly hostile to their own ideas, property and lives. The infamous Mendez Pinto ravaged the coast and plundered the tombs near Ningpo; and at the same port the Portuguese were afterwards massacred for going into the country and seizing wives and virgins. Even in the present day there is but little scruple shown in dealing with the Chinese, by many Foreigners on the coast, as indicated by the Coolie Traffic, the piracies of the Portuguese at Ningpo, and the conduct of a few merchants who have repudiated their engagements; so we may judge what it must have been in these earlier darker times, when the maritime adventurers of Spain and Portugal freely employed torture and death to wring gold from the mild natives of the American Continents, when the Dutch tortured English merchants in the Indian archipelago in order to preserve their own commercial advantages, and when numbers of fierce and cruel adventurers crowded to every newly discovered land, inspired with lust for danger, women and gold. The impression thus conveyed, and not unsupported by similar incidents even to the present time, could not easily be removed from a slow, tenacious, unwarlike people like the Chinese, and it is plain that it underlies much of what is most objectionable in their demeanour towards Foreigners. Even yet the intelligent traveller who goes into villages where he is unknown, a little way from Canton, cannot but recognise that his advent causes apprehension among all, and even a shudder of terror among the women and children. It is this feeling, united with concurrent circumstances, which have caused the murders of Foreigners in the neighbourhood of Canton; it is easily dispelled by a little familiar intercourse with the villagers; and in order to understand it we must go back to the atrocities which have been committed by Foreigners in past times.

At various periods the bad feeling thus raised was in part dissipated by the conduct of Jesuit and other missionaries, and by the manner in which the British East India Company strictly confined itself to the interests of its trade; but the comparatively milder and more humane spirit of modern Foreign residents in China has been more than counterbalanced by the position which Britain has taken up as a nation and the military operations in which it has engaged. The objectionable opium traffic which occasioned our first war with China, the consequent storming of innocent cities and massacre of innumerable Chinese troops who were brave enough to resist and die, the very questionable pretexts of the second war, the ruin of Canton, the reckless indiscriminate operations against so called pirates on the coast, and many other causes have, during the last twenty years, presented us in a light to the Chinese far from calculated to promote understanding and confidence.

Even the Foreign community in China, improved as it is since the days of the buccaneers, is scarcely of a kind calculated to impress the Chinese with a just idea of Europe. In some important respects the term "Barbarian" may be applied to it with fitness and justice. There is much of the Australian and Californian character about it. Men come out here in search of dollars, and are almost entirely occupied either with that pursuit or with the enjoyments of luxury. The anxious inquirer confines himself to the price of teas, with the rise and fall of opium; his studies seldom go beyond the latest steam-boat pattern or improvements in ship-building. Honourable exceptions there are, and both the missionary and consular bodies in China contain many men of high intellect and elevated pursuits, but men of that stamp are less influential here than in any other part of the world ruled by the Anglo Saxon race, unless it be the colonies of Australia, where the settlers present a much lower and rougher level, but are hardly so much injured by luxury and by a material success which requires the exercise of no high, and even few sterling, qualities of mind or character. There are other communities where the mass of men is by no means so intelligent and energetic as is the case with Europeans here, but the former are more subject to higher influences and to the leadership of those above them. Then there is scarcely any female society to exercise a refining and softening influence. Except among the missionaries Religion is almost unknown. Class spirit runs high. The number of libel cases, the violent accusations published, the language used, the criminal cases which arise, usually to be prematurely closed, are sufficient indications of the state of matters, and it may readily be believed that a community which has been favoured with the species of notice it has invariably received from recent visitors of eminence, is not likely to turn a smooth side to the Chinese, on whom it looks down, but often with secret doubt and uneasiness.

The above points have been dwelt on somewhat at length, because they are usually overlooked, and their bearing upon the present position of affairs is clear and of the highest importance. They go far to explain how it is that the Chinese have steadily resisted our demands even when threatened by a force which they were powerless to resist. Feeling themselves underestimated and overborne, having scarcely known Foreigners except as cruel and rapacious buccaneers, or as making war upon them on grounds which they could only regard as shallow pretexts, it is no wonder that the Chinese have fallen into a state of suspicion and terror which makes them resist every Foreign demand as only the prelude to something worse than the demand itself contains.

VI.

The attitude which has been assumed by the Chinese is not that which they were at first disposed to take; and it has markedly increased in hostility since 1839, except when for a time repressed by the pressure of an overwhelming Foreign force. Commerce has increased largely, but commerce was bound to increase with increased facilities for navigation and under the natural law of supply and demand. The increase has been entirely dependent on the increased demand for Chinese products in Europe; for the Chinese have so few wants, and are so much more economical, self-controlled, and organised than Occidentals, that, as a people, they will pay for nothing except by their own products, and so the balance of trade will always be in their favour. Thus the further developement of European commerce with China is conditioned by the increasing demands of Europe for Chinese exports. The inevitable laws of trade have thus far proved superior to the wisdom or to the follies of men; and in spite of the wars and inflictions imposed upon China, her incomparable industry has not failed to meet the increasing demand for her products. Her export of Tea has doubled, and that of Silk has trebled, within a few years of peace, and, dependent on the demand for exports, her consumption of imports has increased in similar ratio. The commerce of China is less fettered by imposts and restrictions than that of any other civilized country, and the products of her skill and of her industry are more and more appreciated. A very good authority on this subject has said,—"Notwithstanding the loose talk that passes current on that subject, there is not a country in the world where commerce has been carried on with so much ease and profit as in China, where the native merchants conduct large transactions so satisfactorily, and where the expanding wants of England are so largely supplied." The ease with which money is made by merchants out here, the abundance of it, with their luxurious and otiose life now as in past times, are sufficient proofs that there are not, and have not been for a very long time at least, any serious obstacles in the way of justifiable commerce, however many suspicions there may have been on that subject. Nor do we find that the great China merchants were in the habit of making complaints on that subject. When Mr Jardine left Canton in January 1839, shortly *before* the commencement of the opium war, and a dinner was given to him on the occasion, he made the following striking remarks, which I recommend to the attention of those who think that our commerce with China has been in any way benefitted by the policy we have pursued:—

"I have been a long time in this country, and I have a few words to say in its favour. Here we find our persons more efficiently protected by laws than in many other parts of the East, or of the world; in China, a foreigner can go to sleep, with his windows open, without being in dread of either his life or property, which are well-guarded by a most watchful and excellent police; but both are periled with little or no protection in many other states; *business is conducted with unexampled facility, and in general with singular good faith*—though there are, of course, occasional

exceptions that but more strikingly bear out my assertion. Neither would I omit the general courtesy of the Chinese in all their intercourse and transactions with foreigners: these, and some other considerations, are the reasons that so many of us so oft re-visit this country, and stay in it so long."

It would be difficult to prove, even if such be the case, that the development of our commerce with China has been delayed and not expedited by our policy and the wars we have entered on; but the connection of the Rebellion with Foreign aggression and ideas may indicate the true state of the case; for the devastation of whole provinces, crowded with millions of people, must, directly or indirectly, do more to hinder commerce than the most favourable treaties can do to aid it.

Turning from commerce to the other ends Foreigners have to serve in China, the subject assumes a darker hue. It has been seen how kindly Mr Jardine spoke of the Chinese and of the safety of dwelling among them previous to the opium war. The missionaries sent out by Louis XIV were honoured residents at the Court of Peking. Earl Macartney was satisfied with his reception. When the *Friendship* was wrecked on Hainan in 1819, the crew (as may be seen from the supercargo's account) were forwarded overland to Canton, with the greatest kindness, free of expense, and without an article being taken from them. Other shipwrecked crews were treated with similar kindness. The same good feeling exists to this day in parts of China which have been unexposed to the pressure of Foreigners. In one of their recent reports (Annals of the Prop. of the Faith, X. p. 7) the Catholic missionaries say,—

"The missionary finds opposite extremes after he has proceeded a few days in his excursions. *His first step in the Celestial Empire is the most dangerous.* . . . His sole protection consists in mysterious concealment. But having once reached the verge of Kwan-tung, he may proceed freely as a European down the slope of the mountain he had ascended in Chinese costume."

Such was the state of matters in China in former years, and such is still the state in its interior provinces; even on the seaboard the traveller or the missionary may still go about with some safety if he be known to the Chinese, or can convince them that he has no wish to offend; but on the whole how changed is the state of matters for the worse! Crews of vessels wrecked on Hainan, as of the steamer *Thebes* a few months ago, are plundered and charged large sums for being brought up to Hongkong. Young men going out a few miles from Canton are mysteriously murdered. Attempts are made to poison the inhabitants of Hongkong. Europeans are killed by mobs at Shanghae. Everywhere there is mutual distrust, mutual dislike; the Chinaman suspecting every Foreign step on his empire as the approach of insult or of violent change, and the Foreigner afraid to go beyond the harbour of Hongkong or the neighbourhood of Canton. Near that latter place there is at present safety for Foreigners, but it has been attained by the destruction of great part of the city, the almost entire suppression of a great mart of trade, an expensive occupation of the place for two years, and military promenades in the adjacent country.

China is closed more than ever to the traveller and the missionary, is it more open to the diplomatist or more likely to enter the comity of nations? Scarcely so when it has for the first time been eminently successful in fight against us, is improving in its long neglected art of war, and has had its faith shaken in our desire to observe treaty stipulations. It must be admitted that at the present moment we are farther off than ever from satisfactory diplomatic relations. Many persons are always looking forward to some satisfactory and invisible end, but as affairs progress, it appears further off than ever. Our representatives assume a higher position than formerly with reference to the Chinese, and it is admitted so long as they have a strong force at their back; but real respect has not increased, while good feeling has been lost, and the Chinese have learned that we are so far from unanimous in our judgment of the policy to be pursued, that any violent enterprises made against them are likely to be crippled and imperfect. Suspicion of our designs is stronger than ever.

VII.

The policy which England has pursued towards China since 1839 has been so unsuccessful and disastrous, that while we are no nearer to any good understanding with the authorities and people, our own government hesitates in employing further force lest the utter ruin of the empire should be the result. Naval and Military officers may desire war as a means to excitement and promotion, the storekeepers of Hongkong find that expeditions increase their trade, and even some of the merchants may see *immediate* advantage in irregularities of traffic and the collection of shipping; but these are matters which do not affect the public and cannot be supposed to influence the policy of a great nation. It is becoming generally felt, and is evident to the candid mind, that the present state of semi-conflict, which has continued for about four years, and the state of uncertainty and dislike by which it was preceded, are extremely hurtful to the public interests of both countries, and should not be allowed to continue, whatever may be the means adopted to procure a change. The further question is also being entertained, Whether all that we can secure and are entitled to demand, may not best be obtained by a more humane and conciliatory policy than that which has been followed of late?

There is no need here for raising the question as to the justice or injustice of the course which has been pursued. It is to be regretted that there is a disposition in Europe, when dealing with Eastern nations, to regard them as entirely beyond the bound of those great principles of right which more or less regulate the conduct of European nations towards each other; and it is especially to be regretted that, under the term "Asiatic," China is so often confounded, as to its character, with more deceitful and slavish nations such as those of Persia and India; but the question of Right has been made so subservient to that of Expediency, it is better to consider in what manner our actual requirements can best be accomplished.

Neither is there any necessity for believing that a wider and more humane policy will be at all retrograde; that, in order to meet the Chinese on the footing of mutual interest and common understanding, it will be necessary to yield any of the vantage ground we have already obtained. It may be expedient to dispense for a time with certain demands which have already been made, and to leave the fulfilment of them to the course of events and good sense of the Chinese, but it should be remembered that these demands are in anything but a fair way of being fulfilled at present, and that even the most objectionable of them, such as the residency at Peking, would probably be granted without difficulty if more of the *comitas inter gentes* ruled our conduct towards China, if certain slight mutual concessions were made, and if something like mutual confidence were to spring up.

Purely on the ground of expediency, and with a view to progress, not retrogression, the opinion may be hazarded that the terms of relationship most acceptable to the Chinese would be precisely those most beneficial to ourselves. Could force be brought to bear on China to a sufficient extent, could we enforce our demands as in India by taking the country under charge and compelling it to adopt the policy which we select, then, perhaps, the employment of force might be vindicated on grounds of expediency. No one, however, who knows about China can suppose such a course possible, or that France, still less Russia, would quietly permit an Anglo-Chinese empire to spring up. Force can only be employed in China in the shape of isolated acts of violence, powerless to impose permanent guidance or control. Even such a small matter as admission to Canton has only been secured by the destruction of the Canton of old, and the withdrawal of a great part of its wealth and population. In like manner the occupation of Peking would only find us, as has been well remarked, "amidst vacant streets, abandoned houses, a wandering, a starving population, too poor to migrate with their betters." The power which we seek to influence eludes our grasp, the commerce we desire to increase is really injured, and the people we desire to conciliate are destroyed and embittered, whenever we have recourse to isolated acts of violence.

Hence the question which England really has to determine is, How are satisfactory, solid and lasting relations to be secured with the Chinese government and people? The question is not whether this concession or that concession on the part of the Chinese might be advantageous to us or itself desirable, but simply, What are the concessions, what the relationships, which may be required in order to a solid and lasting connection between the two countries?

## VIII.

In reference to the above question it is at least obvious that in so far as the connection is based on terms freely granted by both parties, and in so far as it is conducted with consideration on both sides, cordiality will prevail, and mutual confidence

will permit mutual understanding to increase, opposing interests to amalgamate, and animosities to disappear: in so far as the terms are obtained by force they will prevent mutual understanding, promote the opposition of interests, stimulate existing animosities, and create new ones.

Sympathy and interest are the two bonds between nations and between men. By threatening with a revolver I may compel a man, however unwilling, to exchange coats with me, because by introducing the element of force I make it decidedly his interest to do so. By the expeditionary force we hope to compel China to exchange ambassadors with us or yield other demands, because it may be more its interest to do so than to have Peking occupied. The first case is robbery; the second, we call "promotion of Commerce and Civilization." But (as it is employed) granting that such a use of force on the part of a stronger nation be legitimate and just, it is often inexpedient, and may be pushed so far as to defeat its own end.

The primary end which it has to serve is *Interchange*, whether of products, manufactures, knowledge, or sympathies; the two first being more peculiarly the sphere of the merchant, and the latter of the missionary, the teacher, the student, and the traveller. It becomes evident that the employment of force is wholly inexpedient whenever the intercourse it brings is barren in procuring further interchange. It may even be safely said that it is inexpedient whenever it does not promote the interchange of products and manufactures; for force always repels understanding and sympathy, except in some rare cases where it achieves complete conquest. Such conquest is impossible in China, so the question as to the expediency of employing violence to extort terms from the Chinese, resolves itself into the question, Whether terms so extorted will have any effect in promoting commerce?

To this question the most unhesitating negative may be given. The effect of the pressure we have brought to bear has been to check and not promote the development of commerce. The trade of the present day all over the world is of comparatively modern growth, and its expansion during the last thirty years has been enormous beyond the most sanguine expectation. The reduction of duties in some countries, the institution of free trade in others, with unexampled progress in machinery and means of carriage, have given trade such an impetus in Europe and America that it is now essential to the comfort, the well-being and the very existence of masses of the population. So far from being backward in meeting this new movement of the time, China might with justice accuse England of having hindered the progress of interchange by its taxes upon Tea and Silk, so much higher, at least till very lately, than those imposed in China upon English manufactured goods. The demand of Europe and America for Tea and Silk has been met by the Chinese; and if they have not been equally willing to take our manufactured goods, it is only because these have not been well suited to their wants, because that branch of commerce has been rather neglected by English merchants in China, and, above all,

because the importation of Opium, from British possessions in India, adjusts the balance of trade so far that China cannot afford to take more of our manufactured goods. The following tables will illustrate how matters stand in this respect with regard to the Trade of China; but in order that they may not represent the balance of trade as against China, it must be remembered that 1858 was a year of panic in England, and that no account is taken of Chinese exports to Australia, the Straits, &c.:—

| | Imports of British Manufactures. | Exports of Chinese Produce to Britain. |
|---|---|---|
| 1856, . . . | £2,216,123 | £ 9,421,000 |
| 1857, . . . | 2,449,982 | 11,448,000 |
| 1858, . . . | 2,876,447 | 7,043,000 |

| | Imports from India to China. | Exports from China to India. |
|---|---|---|
| 1855-56, . . | £6,592,000 | £787,000 |
| 1856-57, . . | 7,568,000 | 599,000 |
| 1857-58, . . | 9,366,800 | 915,000 |

Thus the balance of from about five to eight millions against England, together with the further balance against it from the trade of China with Australia and other English possessions, is met by the balance of from about five to eight millions and a-half in favour of British India, which balance is almost entirely caused by the sale of Opium, that amounting, for instance, to the value of £8,241,032 in the year 1857-58. The evil effects of the Opium trade are often exaggerated, but, as now pointed out, it does interfere greatly with the useful industry of England and China, besides occupying and exhausting some of the richest land of India. Before any force was brought to bear by England on China the Opium traffic was increasing in as great a ratio as it has done since. In the last twenty years of the eighteenth century it increased tenfold, and sixfold in the next twenty-five. If it be judged that the Chinese government, if left to itself, would have been able to stop the importation of Opium altogether, it may be fairly argued that in that case the interests of commerce would not have suffered, inasmuch as the loss would have been more than made up by the increased market for British manufactures, and by the greater cordiality which would have prevailed between Foreigners and Chinese.

The old exploded fallacy is still reiterated in some quarters, that the trade is injured by the high duties charged at internal custom-houses in China; but of this no proof has ever been adduced, and known facts render it improbable. Mr Wingrove Cooke was one of the first to expose the mistake that the sale of English goods in China was prevented by exactions at custom-houses of the interior; and he was led to his conclusions by finding that most of the English goods at the port of Ningpo were brought there overland from Shanghae, and bore the mark of the Soochau custom-house. His opinion was afterwards borne out by the prices at which Lord

Elgin's expedition up the Yang-tsze found English goods selling in the centre of China. None of the travellers in the interior make mention, so far as I am aware, of special transit duties on tea and silk. A Trade Report of Hongkong contained very lately the following remarkable passage, showing how matters of this kind are not unfrequently dealt with by a large section of the Foreign Mercantile Community in China :—

"It is averred, with every degree of credence and probability, that since the Mandarins have lost the management of the Customs funds, they surreptitiously levy extra transit dues on Foreign imports and exports. Practices of this nature have been positively detected, *and such is the thraldom under which the Chinese traders exist, that they not only conceal them, but they deny them.*"

Such dues would be a grievance to Chinese, equally with Foreign, merchants; and the denial by the latter is much more likely to be true than the gossip of Canton assistants who never go five miles up the river, and who know little about what is going on in the interior except what they learn from compradors and linguists who usually frame their answers to their employer's taste. Whenever anything interferes with the transit of teas, whether it be Rebels or a scanty crop, a cry is got up that the Mandarins are surreptiously levying extra transit dues. The above is a fair specimen of the manner in which such allegations are made; strong language being relied on in the absence of all proof and in the face of satisfactory counter-evidence.

## IX.

The intercourse at present existing between England and China has sprung up from the mutual wants of the two countries and is appreciated by both. Even treaties, as proved lately by the irregular unauthorised ports of Swatow, Chin-chew and Tai-wan, are not necessary to the enlargement of commerce when there are natural openings for it in China, and open ports are not denied whenever there is sufficient trade to support the application. There is among the Chinese people a strong wish to enjoy the benefits of commerce with England; and, though nominally despotic, the country is really far too democratic and too completely governed by the force of general public opinion for the Mandarins to interfere with the wishes of the people in this respect. Many of the high officers have willingly acknowledged the benefits of Foreign commerce; even Commissioner Yeh was doubtless sincere when he wrote to Lord Elgin,—"By the commercial relations ensuing on the establishment of the Treaty between our two countries, the mercantile communities of both have been alike advantaged." When resistance is made people and rulers alike feel they are being hurried on to concessions which are injurious, or to changes to which they are not allowed time to adapt themselves.

It would seem to be the part of wisdom to preserve and improve the intercourse so beneficial to all parties concerned; and it is obvious that the most favourable condition of progress and prosperity is not that of war. Labour is peaceful, and

security for labour and capital is the foundation of commerce: as the security diminishes the products diminish and the costs increase; and, by this inevitable law, the cost of invasion will fall back on the invader.

Not only is it absurd to suppose that commerce can flourish by dint of opposition and war between nations so different and yet so highly civilized as England and China; in the case of the latter country there are peculiar circumstances which render the hope palpably groundless. China has been long isolated, and unaccustomed to intercourse with other nations on a footing of equality. Its character, and the character of its people, with many of their established laws and customs, have been based on that foundation. What is often mistaken for hostility and a desire to avoid intercourse, is simply want of adaptability, confusion, and the stupidity which surprise produces. All men walk within invisible walls of custom, thought and feeling, beyond which they can no more wander than they can wing their flight through the empyrean; and on these the Chinaman is peculiarly dependent. Every man in the empire has his own allotted place and his round of well defined duties, within which he is diligent and at ease; but everything beyond is to him a vast blank, and a terrible blank when he is forced out of his fixed orbit. Mr Tradescant Lay truly remarked of the Chinaman,—"Allow him to follow his own course, with ample space for consideration, and he will move on fairly enough, and you esteem him an ingenious and clever man; but summon him to thought without notice, and you conclude him a fool." The same remark holds good of the nation and government. Their changes extend over centuries, and are not accomplished, as in Europe, in a few eventful years. Hence, when sudden and great changes are demanded of them, the attitude of apparent immobility which they assume. It is not intentional immobility, but utter confusion and incapacity of acting one way or another, and an incapacity which only increases the more they are urged to act. Such, for instance, was Yeh's position in Canton, which has been ascribed to stolid obstinacity, but partook more of helpless resignation.

This slowness of adaptation hampers the action of the Chinese government. It is often argued, and especially in places where the danger of detection is not great, that the Chinese people are well disposed towards us, and that it is only the Tartar rulers who oppose Foreigners and on whom war should be made. The Chinese may be said to be of Tartar stock, and their present Mantchu rulers are now so thoroughly part of the nation that it is not easy to make any distinction between them for practical political purposes. But if the distinction be made, then undoubtedly it is the Chinese who have shewn the most incapacity of adapting themselves to new circumstances, and who, consequently, falling into confusion when urged to do so, regard us with the greatest suspicion and dislike. Commissioner Lin, who stopped the importation of opium by the most vigorous measures, and occasioned the commencement of our wars with China by shutting up the British community and Plenipotentiary in

the factories at Canton until the opium was given up and destroyed, was a Chinaman, a native of Fuh-chow, and did not commence to learn the Mantchu language till after his twenty-sixth year. Yeh—the cruel, unyielding Viceroy—who has been held up as the incarnation of everything blind, obstinate and anti-Foreign that is to be found in the character and disposition of the Mandarins, was also a pure Chinaman, and no way connected with the Tartars, though one of the foremost men in the empire. On the other hand, it has been only Tartar statesmen who have met our diplomatists half-way, and seen both the necessity of yielding to our demands and how to do so. Kiying, the first high Chinese official who appreciated the position of his country with regard to England, was a Tartar, and so also was Ileepu, who negotiated along with him the treaty of Nanking. It was Kiying, at once a great politician and a patriot, who harmonised the old ideas of China with the new power which was threatening it with destruction, who for so many laborious years bore the brunt of the shock between the two antagonist forces, and who—whether judged by the exigencies of his situation, his devotion to the good of his country, or his long and successful labour in aid of Foreign demands—merited high consideration, and far different treatment from that which he received at the hands of Lord Elgin, and which resulted in his brilliant career closing in a dungeon, with self-strangulation at the Imperial command. Kweiliang and Hwashana, who negotiated the treaty of Tien-tsin, were both Tartars; and it is so well known among English officials in China that it is easier to get on with Tartars than with Chinese, that the fact would scarce be worth alluding to (even as exposing the usual loose style of statement in regard to China) were it not for its value as illustrating how far the Tartar government is itself powerless before the slowness of adaptation which is one of the peculiarities of the Chinese character, and which renders all war with China little better than massacre.

The statesmen of China are more enlightened than the public opinion of the country; but, as in other countries, their action is limited by the public; and it is only when what Wordsworth called "God's Daughter" comes to their aid that they can venture on concessions to Foreigners which are repugnant to the general opinion of the people. They themselves would be glad to yield either way, but frequently neither course is possible. Hence it is that our wars in China come to be massacres, destruction of cities and devastation of provinces. We really make war on the public opinion and people of the country, cutting it and them down to the level of our demands. It *is* true that in this respects our wars are "useful"; but, as already pointed out, the demands thus enforced are useless, and instead of obtaining them by force we only remove objections to them by destroying that on which they are made, create new obstacles to our progress, and in no way promote the real ends we have to serve.

Even if war in China may have had some use in promoting the progress of interchange, the present is clearly not a time when it can be used with advantage. The pending questions of etiquette, resulting from previous blunders, are not of importance sufficient again to evoke strife, much less to justify the national calamity of war, which destroys useful lives, invades the comfort of millions, demoralises the people, and, for every man slain in China by actual violence, destroys dozens by starvation, or reduces them from comfort to the lowest depths of poverty. Laou, the Governor General of Kwang-tung, Ho, the Secretary for Foreign affairs, and the Commissioners who signed the treaties, all distinguished members of the peace party in China, have been continued in office, notwithstanding the rupture at Taku. In regard to the stipulations of the American treaty Britain has been allowed to take advantage of the favoured nation clause. Thus the Chinese have shewn their desire to preserve peace; and—whether it be considered an act of the local militia (as Lord Palmerston would have it) or as the exercise, on the part of the Chinese government, of a prerogative which is allowed to all nations—only by the utmost perversion of thought and feeling can the Taku conflict of 1859 be regarded as any proof of hostility. They are a most peace-loving people. They require our aid against the pressure of Russia; and our weapons of warfare, to use against the Rebels. On the other hand, H.M. government professes to desire a pacific settlement of matters; the people of England undoubtedly have that desire; and the intelligence of England has spoken out more clearly and strongly than ever before in condemnation of the course which has been pursued in China. War is desired only by a portion of the Foreign community in this region, irritated by the antagonism of race and not highly distinguished by intelligence, together with that portion of the home public which still clings to vulgar and antiquated ideas of China and of the course to be pursued towards it. Strange that war should be so imminent when all the principal parties concerned in it desire that it should be averted! when it can only ensue through a victory of cunning over the conscience and political thought of England!

## X.

The more carefully and candidly our relations with China are studied the more clearly will it be seen that the want of rapid adaptability on the part of the Chinese, together with the harsh, even cruel, treatment which they have received from Foreigners, have been the two great obstacles to a pacific settlement of our disputes with them. If on enquiry it be found that such is the case, there will be little difficulty in determining the course which ought to be pursued in order to secure a solid and lasting connection.

The policy to be pursued must be limited by the amount of mutual confidence as well as based on the extent of mutual interests. If regard be had only to the interests (real or supposed) of our merchants and politicians in China, it is impossible

that a satisfactory policy can be carried out, because these interests are sometimes antagonistic to those of the Chinese, and so it will only be by the constant pressure of force that the relationship can be sustained. It is not even sufficient to consult the mere interests of the Chinese. Their views of their interests (however erroneous in our opinion) must be taken in to account so far as to allow mutual confidence to increase.

Such confidence is the first essential to solid and lasting relationships. If we approach the Chinese government, as Mr Bruce did at Taku, with a settled and preconceived idea that they are resolved to be treacherous and to set treaty stipulations at naught, it is vain to hope that we can get on any better with them than the Hon. Mr Bruce did. Evident, or ill-concealed, want of faith notoriously produces breach of faith; the dictate of human nature being,—"If you mistrust me I'll give you some reason for doing so." But it is a quite unwarranted assertion that the Chinese are unfaithful to their treaty obligations. They have been more faithful than England has been. The only case in support of this allegation is their denial of admission to Canton; but it is extremely doubtful whether we really had any treaty right of admission, and Sir Henry Pottinger virtually gave it up. If on that insignificant open question—referring to the only stipulation among so many of importance all of which have been so faithfully observed by China toward England, France, Sweden and America—the Chinese are to be roundly accused of a tendency to evade or deny treaty obligations, what shall be said of England's disregard of treaty obligations in connection with the following the 12th article of the Supplementary treaty?—

"A fair and regular Tariff of duties and other dues having now been established, it is to be hoped that the system of smuggling which has heretofore been carried on between English and Chinese merchants—in many cases with the open connivance and collusion of the Chinese Custom-house officers—will entirely cease; and the most peremptory Proclamation to all English merchants has been already issued on this subject by the British Plenipotentiary, who will also instruct the different Consuls to strictly watch over, and carefully scrutinize, the conduct of all persons, being British subjects, trading under his superintendence. In any positive instance of smuggling transactions coming to the Consul's knowledge, he will instantly apprize the Chinese Authorities of the fact."

All the enormous opium traffic has been carried on in open violation of the above article, and also all the traffic at such irregular ports as Swatow and Chinchew. All the Consuls have been cognizant of these violations of the treaty, but what attempt has been made to fulfil the obligation entered into? It is nothing better than a piece of wolfish affectation on the part of England to accuse China of a breach of treaty stipulations. The Chinese have given sufficient proof that in regard to these they act as honestly as they can, and until that fact is admitted, and appreciated as it ought to be, there can be no hope for solid and lasting relations.

The second general rule to ensure satisfactory relations is to confine the use of force to what it can itself accomplish, and not to bring it to bear on things which lie beyond its sphere. When force is employed in international affairs, the more effec-

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tually it is done so the better, and it should never be applied, except to resist acts of oppression, where there is not good ground to believe it will be successful. Especially should this be the case when it is had recourse to in order to change, as in the case of China, the passive (yet not aggressive, oppressive, or unfriendly) attitude of a great nation into one of friendly reciprocity and interchange.

Any use of violence in such a cause has a dubious appearance, requiring all the crinoline of phraseology to make it decent; but nothing can justify or palliate its use as an instrument of torture in such a cause—as a screw put on China to make it yield certain demands which we are ourselves unable or unwilling to seize by direct violence. There is a vast difference between forcibly taking what we want out of a weaker man's pocket, and torturing him with a thumbikin until he gives it "of his own free will." It is a lenient offence to break open the door of a man's house which he shuts against us, compared with "inducing" him to open by flogging or killing his nephew before it. In like manner, it may be, and sometimes is, allowable to take from China what we can directly seize and hold, and yet it is a great crime to slaughter its people and torture its government in order to compel it to give assent to our demands.

Nor is such a course less a crime than a mistake. Both men and gods submit cheerfully enough to what they are powerless to resist, and, accepting the fact, in a short time accommodate themselves to it. But when it comes to be a question of renouncing one's own will, at the dictation of others, it often happens that the best men and the best nations will hold out most obstinately against all the torture and suffering which can be brought to bear upon them. Hence the folly and wickedness of the policy pursued by England in China. Not content with making demands which it can enforce, it insists on demands which can only be carried out by the acquiescence of the Chinese; and, in order to procure that, virtually tortures the nation and government. It is foolish and cruel to insist on the friendly acquiescence of the Chinese, by which alone some of our recent demands can be fulfilled, and at the same time to apply the torture of war as the means of obtainment. The seizure and partition of a country, as in the case of Poland, is nothing compared with this. Were such a course pursued towards any European state, however weak and humble, not positively aggressive, Europe would combine against the power that ventured upon it. Such a course in India would bring matters to a dead lock in six months, and produce a general massacre. It can only be attempted in China, because the Chinese are the most peace-loving, reasonable and quiet people in existence; but it should not be forgotten that neither men nor nations can trample with impunity on the gentler and better qualities of humanity; that mildness is not always unaccompanied with strength; and that even where it is, there is always some power—as England in regard to Spain, and France to Austria—which will take up the quarrel, subdue the ruthless aggressor, whether by the arts of war or peace, and vindicate the sound feeling of the great heart of the world.

XI.

It cannot be denied that the treaty of Tien-tsin reflects high credit on the insight and diplomatic skill of the Earl of Elgin, and of his assistants Messrs Wade and Lay, though its accomplishment was mainly owing to the somewhat overlooked fact that the Chinese government is willing and anxious to do everything in its power to promote friendly relations with Europe. Its ratification has been delayed more by the ill-conceived instructions of Lord Malmesbury to the Hon. Mr Bruce, and by that gentleman's overbearing attitude, than by the objectionable nature of some of its stipulations; but of these there are some which press too heavily on China, and demand reconsideration. Various opinions are entertained on the subject; and I insert here the following able communication upon it, from one of the leading Foreign merchants in China, only premising that he seems to me erroneous in supposing that the Chinese have as yet shown disposition to refuse the fulfilment of their treaties even when assent has been obtained by force:—

"The practical differences between the civilizations of the West and the East, are presented in strong contrast by their different views in regard to international treaties.

"It is a maxim in the West, that treaties once made must be executed in whole and in all their parts; and no greater disgrace falls on a government than the deliberate nonfulfilment of treaty provisions.

"But this is not the maxim of the East; treaties are not thus understood or executed.

"The rule with the Chinese, exemplified by the history of their treaties, is, that those provisions which are beneficial to commerce, to the industry, and to the great interests of the country, which have received their free assent, are binding; and those other provisions which have not received their free assent are not binding.

"They oppose uniformly, as well after as before signing, provisions which are odious to them. The treaty of Nanking opened to foreigners the gates of Canton, but they were kept out for years by the sturdy resistance of the Chinese—not by force, but by arguments against the expediency or the justice of enforcing the agreement.

"It is not of moment to consider, in this connection, whether or not the Chinese view of treaty obligations is, in the abstract, right; but it is worth while to appreciate the fact that such are their views and their practice, as it is these with which we have to deal.

"I would however suggest that in the Courts of Justice among the civilized nations of the West, the fundamental fact required in contracts is, that their provisions shall have received *the voluntary assent of the mind of both parties*, and if the evidence of that assent is wanting, the contract is null and void.

"This is the vital principle of the contract in all its forms; it regulates the dealings of individuals, of associations, and societies, among the most civilized peoples, and it is the same principle which the Chinese apply to the treaty-contract.

"The rule which requires the voluntary assent of the mind is obviously a rule of justice, while that which requires fulfilment without such assent is the rule of injustice.

"Whether or not the Chinese, who in their simplicity or their wisdom have applied the great rule of justice to the treaty-contract, have thereby placed their civilization on higher ground or on lower ground than we, who apply to treaties the rule of force, is a question which may be left to philosophy.

"But that they will thus act in regard to the treaty of Tien-tsin, may be safely predicted, and it will not be uninteresting to see how it will affect them.

"There are three provisions in those treaties which in the opinion of the Chinese will bear hard on them.

"1*st*. The forced residence of a Minister at Peking. This they allege will impair the influence and authority of the government, and is offensive to the dignity of the Emperor, because it is forced; their opposition to it after signing was so feeling and earnest, that Lord Elgin recommended a relaxation of it, but it has been since suggested that this relaxation will be withdrawn.

"2*d*. The provision for the interior transit of Chinese produce, free from the usual taxes.

"This measure will invade the local and Imperial Treasuries, and disturb the fixed arrangements of every province.

"The government is weak in its administrative department, and is not able to enforce methods of revenue which are not consecrated by usage, and for which the organization sanctioned by time does not exist.

"It is moreover a measure in violation of the great principle of non-interference in internal affairs so recently made prominent by England in application to Italy, assented to by France, and applauded by the world.

"3*d*. The free navigation of the Yang-tsze-kiang,—a provision which invades the national sovereignty, carries foreign consular jurisdiction to the interior, and theatens to destroy the property and the industry of a great population engaged in carrying.

"The forced concession of such a river would be justly resisted by any government on earth, and how the demand can be justified is difficult to conceive.

"These are the provisions of the Treaties of Tien-tsin which are repugnant to the Chinese; they did not voluntarily assent to them, and do not feel bound by them.

"It is therefore vain to rely on the existence of the treaties, for their fulfilment; nothing but the pressure of force—sufficient force, can secure the execution of provisions obtained by force, and which derive no support from the sense of right inherent in the minds of men.

"Are these concessions worth what they will surely cost? They will compel the French government equally to make permanent establishments of force sufficient to insure their observance, for the Emperor's government cannot afford to retire and

have its treaty flung on its heels. The recent experience of His Majesty who invaded Cochin China, for a real or fancied cause, is instructive.

"Unable to reach the government, unable to obtain a treaty, and unable to retire with honour without one, his forces were compelled to concentrate at Saigon, where they await the smiles of Fortune or the King to relieve them.

"The best security for the fulfilment of the treaties would be, to make them satisfactory to both sides, when it will be the interest of both to preserve them.

"The benefit to England from the provisions so obnoxious to the Chinese will be small, in comparison with the cost and with the inconvenience of compelling her Ally to remain in the field to watch the fulfilment—a neighbour and rival to share her influence and clog her policy."

The questionable points relating to the treaty of Tien-tsin on which I would remark, are—

1*st*. The residency at Peking. This is the most important stipulation of the treaty; and the fast-and-loose style of our diplomacy in China is well illustrated by the hardihood with which it was insisted on and the indifference with which it would be given up. There is no need of having an Ambassador at Peking; it would be sufficient for all practical purposes at present to have a Resident there as at Courts in India, but not communicating with the Emperor, only with his Ministers. This Resident should be himself a Chinese scholar, and well acquainted with Chinese customs, as well as a man of political ability. The great difficulty in the way of the Peking residency is the sacred character of the Emperor, in whom all the knowledge and judgment of the country centres. To insist on the fulfilment of a stipulation which would degrade him from his high position before all his subjects, would be tantamount to shaking and injuring the whole structure of the state. But in order to there being a resident at Peking it would only be necessary to insist on the change of a point of etiquette—the not publicly recognising him until he has been received at Court. It is evident that force in direct action cannot secure the fulfilment of this stipulation; for if, by means of an army, we established our Minister in Peking, the Native government would retire. It is a matter to be settled purely by negotiation, as the Russians have done in regard to their Mission; and there are reasons to believe it could be obtained without difficulty. It is also of incalculable importance that the Chinese should send a Minister to London; and this they are already thinking about, already disposed to undertake, in order to gain a better knowledge of Foreign nations. In the Japanese Mission to the United States we have an instance how easily an important point of this kind can be obtained, even from the most exclusive nation in the world, when it is set about in a considerate and reasonable manner.

2*d*. The permission for British Subjects to travel in the interior of the country. This stipulation is also of great importance. It is unobjectionable that the Chinese

government should be required to engage not to interfere with British subjects travelling under passports from their Consuls, and on their own responsibility. This article makes no provision for the protection of Englishmen so travelling; but it provides that when these commit offences they shall, instead of being amenable to the laws of the country, be handed over to their Consul. Here may be a fruitful source of trouble. Foreigners travelling "for the purposes of trade" will not unlikely soon constitute an *imperium in imperio*. The Mandarins will complain that they not only disregard the regulations of the country, but cause the Chinese in their employ to do so; and the Foreigner will be apt to consider any interference with the Chinese as coming under the forbidden head of "offering opposition to his hiring persons, or hiring vessels for the carriage of his baggage or merchandize." For the protection of their own authority the Mandarins may excite mobs to assail the traveller, whose life, in the interior of China, will thus be dependent not on his own prudence alone, but on the prudence and moderation of other travellers of Foreign countries. It is difficult to see how this matter can be arranged in any other way from that which the treaty provides; but it is so perplexed and delicate that it should be settled only by the unforced assent of the Chinese government, and only in so far as it has been so will travel be at all safe. It was a mistake to insert the express stipulation that travelling should be allowed "for the purposes of trade," as that would follow, in the ordinary course, when the travellers conduct themselves properly, and do not attempt, in ignorance or presumption, to ride rough shod over the ideas and feelings of the people of the country,—thereby injuring trade. Such pioneers of civilization as England has in Japan are not likely to get on remarkably well in the interior of China.

*3d.* The abolition of interior transit dues. As already pointed out there is a want of reliable information on that subject; but if dues are levied, the objections taken by the Foreign merchant (see ante p. 23) to this article of the treaty appear unanswerable. Moreover, the levying of transit dues must secure a certain protection to the transit; and it is probable that increased insecurity of transit would injure trade more than the dues can. All such taxes are evaded by smuggling when they get beyond a certain point, say about 10 per cent on the value, and that, in the circumstances, would not be unreasonable. In this matter the interests of the Chinese people are identical with ours, and they may be safely left to protect themselves.

*4th.* The free navigation of the river Yang-tsze. On this it may be justly said that many benefits to the Chinese will arise from it, in part, at least, repairing the losses which it will cause. Unless it is resisted by the Chinese, there appears no sufficient objection to it; but the right is one we have no claim to insist on unless it be freely granted.

*5th.* Indemnity for the expenses of the war. The injustice of such a demand is frightful, for our officials looked round for a pretext of quarrel and deliberately

selected one which the British Parliament condemned as a fraud, and as an insufficient ground for hostilities. Even when war is unavoidable with the Chinese it is but fair that we should bear our share of the expense, inasmuch as it arises from the misunderstanding and opposition incident to the meeting of two different kinds of civilization. It is we who seek the chief benefits that are supposed to result; and Heaven knows the Chinese suffer sufficiently by these wars without having to defray our expenses. The demand for indemnity money places us in a base position before their eyes, as they have more than once indicated, and also before the eyes of the world. We abuse the French Emperor because he has taken the insignificant provinces of Savoy and Nice, after, at enormous risk and expense, placing Italy in a position to work out its own salvation; and yet we make China pay for the expense of a war which it did all in its power to avoid, and which the British House of Commons condemned! No country, however powerful, can commit such crimes before theGod of nations, without having at last to suffer great penalties.

*6th.* The legalizing of the Opium traffic. The introduction of this drug is repugnant to the mass of the people of China, and it is probable that even of Opium smokers a large majority would be found in favour of its exclusion. It is one great cause of the dislike entertained towards Foreigners. The repeated refusals of the Emperor to replenish his impoverished treasury by a tax legalizing the introduction of this drug, and the total destruction of 20,291 chests of it, worth about ten millions of dollars, at Canton in 1839, are sufficient indications of the strength of the feeling entertained on the subject. The Chinese government, aided by the people, could probably stop its introduction, did they not believe that Foreigners are resolved to uphold the traffic by all and any means. It is better that it should be legally introduced than smuggled; but neither alternative may be necessary. If we can only assure the Chinese that we have no desire to insist upon the traffic, are ready to fulfil the stipulations of the Nanking treaty in regard to smuggling, and will give them our moral support in any action which they have a right to take against Foreign vessels introducing Opium, the traffic might very possibly be stopped in eighteen months. Such a result would be highly beneficial alike to the Chinese, to India, and to the manufacturing industry of Great Britain. In China it would raise the character of Foreigners greatly, and do more to promote confidence than almost anything else could. In India it would release the richest land of the country from a cultivation which impoverishes it, and is profitable only to the government, but which the government cannot rely upon as a source of revenue. It would provide a great market in China for the manufactures of England, and give increased employment to English shipping. Viewed in every possible light—of religion, philanthropy, commerce and industry—the Opium traffic stands condemned, except in the light of the private interests of a few Foreign merchants in China who make enormous sums by it. In these circumstances there is no special call for legalizing

the traffic at present; but if that is to be done it should at least only be for a limited period.

## XII.

There are many subjects beyond the treaty which demand consideration, and a few of which may be briefly referred to.

1*st*. The Chinese are able diplomatists, none more so, and appoint their best men to deal with Foreign affairs. It is but right and prudent that England should place the management of its affairs in China in superior hands, not into those of political adventurers, or a mere Foreign Office *Routinier* It is only when affairs with China are in the hands of such plenipotentiaries as those just mentioned that difficulties arise, wars ensue, and an able man like Lord Elgin is required to settle the miserable complications which have arisen. The interests at stake are of sufficient magnitude to warrant the presence in China of a "number one" diplomatist of high character.

2*d*. It would be well if H.M. Consular service in China were disabused of the idea that those of them who are anti-Chinese have the best chance of approval and promotion; for it leads able ambitious officials to be very sharp with high officers of the Chinese government, and to assume a higher tone than they would otherwise take. There have been but too good grounds for thinking that friendliness towards the Chinese was a bar to Consular promotion; and the anxiety of Chinese officials to avoid personal interviews with Foreigners has in part arisen from the manner in which they have been personally treated. In this respect matters have already been changed, but they still require improvement.

3*d*. The extent and importance of our relations with China fully warrant an increase of efficient Interpreters. It would also be well if young men selected for this service studied Chinese for some time at home, under a competent teacher,—which they might easily do so far especially as the characters are concerned—in order that their minds may be sufficiently enlarged, and their principles formed, to enable them to meet with safety in this part of the world the various temptations to which they are subject from the agreeable tone of life, the pressure of local interests, and the great powers which soon pass into their hands.

4*th*. It is of special importance when dealing with the Chinese that our demands should be distinctly made; and that when we desire something more than our treaties contain it should be frankly demanded. A very different and injurious course has been pursued. A quarrel has been picked with them on some dubious point of existing treaties, in which they cannot see that we are in the right; and then war has been made. This hypocritical and cowardly policy inevitably excites distrust. The Chinese do not know what to make of this. It destroys their confidence in our desire to fulfil treaties; and, taken in conjunction with the demands for indemnity

money, makes them believe that our object in forming treaties is to get a clause inserted on which we can raise a new question and have a pretext for again making war and saddling them with all the expense. If our new demand were frankly stated to them, we may be sure that they would do all in their power to grant it rather than have war; but we dodge about in such a mean and yet turbulent manner, that they are involved in hostilities before they even know what it is we really want.

*5th.* The idea should be discarded that we are justified in basing our policy with China on the fancy that it is a "semi-civilized nation," and to be treated as inferior. All civilizations are imperfect—ours as well as theirs; and Mr Meadows spoke only truth when he pointed out that the civilization of China is the highest in *kind*, whatever it may be in degree, that the world has yet seen. But, whatever opinion may be entertained on that subject, it is obvious that a speculation as to the character and extent of the civilization of the two countries is scarcely a ground on which to determine political action. The less we proceed on fancied notions of the Chinese, and the more on clear, just grounds of our own, the better will it be for all parties. It has been well remarked that the truly great man is not sent into the world "to expect reason and nobleness of others; he is there to give of his own." The same holds true of nations, and if Britain really is so much superior to China as the least civilized of our countrymen assert, it is for Britain to display her greatness by kindness and moderation.

*6th.* Some aid should be given to the Chinese government in restoring order and re-establishing its prestige. Being the safety-valves of a country, and always in part arising from real evils, Rebellion and Revolution should never be lightly interfered with by powers external to the nation where they unhappily exist; and in China a peculiar interest has been given to the Rebellion by its promising at one time to form a rather peculiar Chinese Christianity. I should be sorry to argue that the internal concerns of a self-complete nation, constituting more than a third of the human race, should be violently and summarily interfered with, in order temporarily to protect our commerce; and it is probable that such interference would ultimately defeat the end it was meant to serve. But England, with its stronger material civilization, and scarcely knowing what it was doing, knocked the Chinese government over, and so would be justified in restoring it to its former position, and then allowing it to stand or fall on its own strength. The exultation of Chinese villages, districts and provinces when any of their sons pass literary examinations and rise in the government service, shows how attached the people still are to the government, despite the manner in which, as in England, they criticise its acts, and grumble at what we call "squeezes" on the part of the Mandarin, but which really constitute a system of taxation dependent on the public opinion of the country. But the power of the government lay chiefly in its moral prestige,—the sight of a Mandarin's insignia would dispel the most turbulent crowd; and since the government has been defeated

and insulted by Foreigners, its troops slaughtered, and its treasuries emptied, all "the savages of civilization" in China, together with men in want and a portion of the lowest classes, have set order at defiance and crosed the country in various directions, plundering and murdering. Of these many are mere local marauders; and even the *Tai Ping* Rebels, or followers of the Great Peace, appear to bring the peace of death and desolation, so far as our accounts go. Hence, while it would be unjust to bolster up a government weakened by its own internal rottenness, much good might result from assisting, in some well considered and judicious manner, this Chinese government which we have so deeply injured.

## XIII.

The general political bearings of Britain's position in Eastern Asia are fitted to cause anxiety. It is not here as in India, where for some time we have had a pretty large corner of the world entirely to ourselves, and have not much reason to be proud of what has been made of it. Russia has long had a Mission, composed of able men, at Peking,—giving in to Chinese customs, but exercising a powerful influence; and her position in Siberia has enabled her to annex large provinces in the North of China, together with the very large neighbouring island of Sagalien. America has a considerable commerce; and by diligently cultivating amicable relations with the Chinese, stands high in their opinion, and slips in often before the wind of destiny. France has her missionaries scattered over China in native costume; and our operations are hampered by an alliance with her.

When we adopt a severe policy, Russia is our formidable rival; whenever we have begun to destroy, that has given her an opportunity to annex. When a mild, pacific, policy is chosen, America is able to outbid. And in France we are fettered by an ally which has no commerce to preserve, and is probably ambitious as to its future in this part of the world.

While we have been really playing so largely into the hands of these powers, the odium of the proceedings in China has fallen upon us. Though Russia has gained in vast territorial acquisitions which can be colonised, America in commerce and influence, and France in establishing a new position, it is England which stands before the Chinese, and will stand in history, as the responsible Power, the great actor in the tragedy which is now being played. And should it finally turn out with us to be a case of *sic vos non vobis*, the honour of having opened China to other nations will be found to belong to Kiying, who was the first to propose that all nations should be received on the same footing, rather than to England and Sir Henry Pottinger who acquiesced in, and took the credit of, the arrangement.

The progress of Russia, in particular, in Eastern Asia, is dangerous both to England and America. Were she able to draw unlimited levies from the millions of China,—who, under a suitable organization, might be made as good soldiers as any in the

world, for their defficiency in *élan* would be compensated for by their obedience and disregard of death,—nothing, humanly speaking, could prevent her becoming mistress of the world. Meanwhile the Allies only serve her end, by dealing blow after blow from the sea-board on the government of China. If this course be pursued much longer, England will have to enter on a military occupation of one portion of the country, wasting our own funds or exhausting the occupied provinces; while Russia will be thoroughly incorporating the other portion into her iron-bound empire.

For England the only course which can be successful against her rivals is one worthy of her character and traditions. No intelligent Englishman will venture to say that the past history of his country towards feebler powers, and especially in the East, has never been darkened by cruelty or stained with crime; but, compared with that of her rivals for power, it has been a history of good faith kept and humanity triumphant. When the flag that waved over the Spanish Main yielded its proud supremacy—when Holland,—

Crouching at home and cruel when abroad,

was swept over liberated seas—and when the genius of Bussy was unable to redeem the French policy of faithless intrigue in India, we may see on the one side a selfish greed for personal gain which would not hear reason, coupled with a severe and narrow-minded policy which ignored the future, while on the other the most energetic enterprise was to some extent guided by the light of humanity and truth. Strength is generous, but weakness cruel; and on the Western shores of the Pacific that nation will prosper most which can rise most above the immediate wishes and selfish interests of its pioneers, to an enlightened appreciation of China and a humane regard for her position.

## XIV.

The question which England will soon have to determine is, Whether it shall select territorial occupation in China, or a policy founded on mutual interests and cemented by a practical acknowledgment of past errors.

By the former possibility the gloomiest forebodings are suggested, both to English commerce and to "the *toiling* millions" of China. With scarce a dozen agents who know the language, scarce two who understand the country, shall we undertake to displace a system of government which we cannot adopt, which has sprung out of the character and needs of the people, which is hallowed by time to the great masses of the country, and which was all-powerful till insulted and shaken by Foreigners? In order to this, France equally with England will claim a share of the spoil, America may follow in our footsteps, and Russia will be the chief gainer; but on England will rest the responsibility of destroying a national edifice which has been the work of forty centuries. Like the man of Soong we shall make the grass grow by pulling it out of the ground.

By the latter course China may be preserved from internal revolution and Russian pressure. The two great sections of the Anglo-Saxon race may well unite in protecting this Patriarch of Civilization against the military powers of Europe, and the rude unthinking energies of their own youthful pioneers. China is the England of the East; the United States, the England of the West. The three great Industrial Nations of the World have a claim upon each other's forbearance, intelligence, and aid; for it has been by the same constant fruitful labour, and by regard for the welfare of their people, that peace and prosperity have abounded within their borders. The two more youthful and more vigorous nations may yet find that these calm Celestials—whose grotesquer aspects have caused so much merriment—have already solved many great social problems which become every day more threatening both in England and America; that their stored wisdom contains much, besides competitive examinations, which we may turn to account; and that, though weaker than the denizens of the West, they have reached a higher social and political development than any other which Time sees or History records.

On the other hand, let the Chinese cease to have reason to think that our mission towards them is one of destruction, let some allowance also be made for their slowness in change, and they will be found to be, as they have always been, an eminently reasonable people, willing to meet our just demands, ready to use our inventions and manufactures so far as these meet their wants, and open to receive our better ideas so far as they can comprehend them. The national intellect will start from a new point, and have time to assimilate the new ideas which are forced upon it. One vast remnant of antiquity, inspired with new life, will prove to present times and distant ages that the power which England exercised in the East was one of "life unto life," as well as death unto death. A nation and polity which existed when Abraham pitched his tent on Bethel, will remain to tell future generations, in quiet but truthful history, the first dawning of civilization in the dark morning of Time. Instead of foreign conquest, unwittingly crushing the good and encouraging the bad—who are always the most ready to adopt themselves to new circumstances,—all the sources of real vitality in China will be excited to nobler action. Its people and government will have time to understand that the God of Hurricanes in the South and the Spirit of the Snow-storm in the North no longer inclose them as if they were dwelling in a separate star. They will adapt themselves to the new change, without losing Time's unexampled medal which they bear. What if our steamers do not vex the waters of the Yang-tsze, or our "commercial gents" drive their gigs on the banks of the Grand Canal! A better and greater result will be achieved; for the Chinese themselves will develope their industry to a far higher extent than we could do for them. They will cheerfully avail themselves of the resources of modern science. The vast network of streams which intersect their country, will be stirred by innumerable

steamers with native engineers and captains. The mountains of Yun-nan and Sze-chuen will yield their mineral treasures. The Bohea mountains will scatter their leaves more thickly over the civilized world. China may become the rice-granary of the East. There will be no difficulties in the way of the Foreign traveller who really desires to know the Celestial land, to promote her civilization, to teach the religion of Peace, or to join her traders, on a legitimate footing, in schemes of mutual advantage. Her redundant population will restore prosperity to our West Indian possessions, provide labour for those parts of Australia where men of European origin cannot work, and gradually colonise the wild islands of the Malay Archipelago. Thus England and China shall benefit alike; while, both prospering alike,—

> Each future day increase of wealth shall bring,
> And o'er the past Oblivion stretch her wing.

So may England achieve a nobler victory in the distant East than ever shone in any nation's crown. But let it persist in the course which it has inherited from the spoilers out of the South of Europe, let it continue useless and destructive demands, drive a frightened government to destruction, and again massacre a peaceful people down to the level of its barren wants, then England may reap the glory of having overcome, and in overcoming destroyed, a most ancient nation, which the hosts of Assyria, the armies of the Macedonian, the eagles of Rome, and the Generals of Bagdad left untouched; but such a glory will be little better than that of the rude highwayman who could boast that he had cut short some noble life, and China ruined may haunt England to destruction, even as the ghost of Montezuma gave encouragement and justice to every blow which was struck at the maritime and commercial power of Spain.

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